

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

# Green Economy Training

Cristina Willard, CPE Director

Katie Thomson, CPE Program Coordinator



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# Overview and Outcomes

- Continuing Professional Education (CPE) began solar training in 2021
  - 81 participants in classes and green economy event, FY21-24
- Developed a solid foundation of 8 green economy courses
  - Increased presence as regional solar training provider
  - Increased awareness of green economy jobs in the region
- Expanded training options at the Learning and Career Center (LCC)
  - Industry-leading equipment for hands-on student learning
  - Created programs aligned with Illinois' Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)
- 73% of CPE students surveyed work in the green energy industry



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# Funding

## ILLINOIS GREEN ECONOMY NETWORK (IGEN)

- **Curriculum Development** – Funding to develop eight courses and one event since 2021
- **Equipment and Materials** – Solar panels at LCC (at right), as well as solar demonstration units, solar sales classroom, and textbooks
- **Tuition** – Tuition support in solar classes totaling \$11,155
- **Marketing and Events** – Marketing and outreach support includes digital marketing campaign, targeted emails, banner, and flyers. Hosted Green Economy Event at LCC on April 22, 2022
- IGEN provided \$110,875 from FY21-24

## CLIMATE AND EQUITABLE JOBS ACT (CEJA)

Part of consortium of 6 regional community colleges receiving \$3M in funding toward green energy training

## PATHS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER

\$1,707 in tuition support



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# Vinyl Banner Promoting Programs

Continuing Professional Education at Harper College

## Prepare for a Green Career!

### Professional Training for Smart Energy Careers

- Learn in-demand skills for sustainable industries
- Gain expertise in the field of renewable energy
- Find a career in a growing job market
- Contribute to a greener and more sustainable future

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# Program Areas

- Solar Photovoltaic Associate
- Solar Installation
- Technical Sales
- Cybersecurity in the Smart Energy Environment



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# Green Economy Outlook



## Regional Outlook for Sustainability Careers

Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, Will Counties – 2021-2024

<p><b>+12.9%</b></p> <p>% Change (2021-2024)</p> <p>Nation: <b>+12.6%</b></p>	<p>\$38.90/hr</p> <p><b>\$80.9K/yr</b></p> <p>Median Earnings</p> <p>Nation: \$38.61/hr;</p> <p><b>\$80.3K/yr</b></p>	<p>19,935</p> <p>Annual Openings</p>
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### Annual wages (median) in Harper region:

- Solar Installers – **+128%** – \$45K
- Technical Sales – **+53%** – \$122K
- Project Management – **+7.68%** – \$101K
- Cybersecurity Analyst – **+6.3%** – \$116K

Source: Lightcast

CEJA requires Illinois to transition to 50% clean energy by 2040. Renewable energy production has doubled 2021-2024.

Source: Illinois.gov



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# Instructors

## Kyle Barber

- Solar Installation
- Solar Consultant & Instructor, Smart Rate Energy

## Jacob Bond

- Cybersecurity in the Smart Energy Environment
- Security Analyst, CyberArk

## Eric Gronwick

- Technical Sales
- Solar PV Associate
- Solar Sales, GRNE/Nelnet

## Corey Wirrick

(shown far right)

- Solar PV Associate
- Solar Installer, Sunrun



SEMIFINALIST

2025

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# Future Opportunities

- Connect CPE green economy programming with Community Education career exploration courses and Harper College credit programs:
  - **Business Administration** *(green business owners, marketing, sales, accounting)*
  - **Cybersecurity** *(cybersecurity analysts for the smart energy grid)*
  - **Electronics Engineering Technology** *(solar installers, electricians)*
  - **Geography/GIS** *(environmental scientist, climate analyst, drone surveying)*
  - **HVAC** *(energy-efficiency specialist, alternative heating/cooling)*
- Expand certifications and guided course pathways – solar installation, technical sales, and green energy cybersecurity
- Increase outreach and new partnerships – green economy companies, associations, electrical union (IBEW Local 134)
- Ongoing funding – supporting tuition, solar installation equipment, additional promotion of green economy careers



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# Thank you!

# Questions?

**Continuing Professional Education**

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